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CD 615 Discipleship Development in the Home

Chris Kiesling

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Department of Christian Education
Course Prospectus

CD 615 -Discipleship Development in the Home (3 hours)

A study of the relationship of the church to the home in the joint enterprise of strengthening the family, nurturing children, and bringing them to mature Christian discipleship. Systemic reflection on the doctrine of Creation, the relation of human sexuality to the image of God, and the summons to “new men and women” of faith as representatives of the divine image to infants, children, and to the entire human community. Special attention is given to the contemporary threats to the family and to examining the effects of divorce and father absence. .

Instructor:

Chris Kiesling	B.G.St., M.Div., Ph. D.
Meeting Room:	9:30-10:45 TTH, M103
Office:	FM108 (the "womb" of the bookstore)
Phone:	858-2382 (If I am unavailable you may access my voice mail)
E-Mail:	c_kiesling@asburyseminary.edu
Office Hours:	Wednesday 9:30 – 11:00 or by appointment

Course Objectives

The student showing competence in this class will be able to:

1. Connect the origins of the family, family roles, one's view of personhood and relationships to a Trinitarian perspective from the intent of the Creation account.
2. Recognize the effects of the fall, the disintegration of family life, and the yet unshakable confidence of God to utilize families and communities of faith in His redemptive plan via explication of particular Biblical narratives.
3. Describe sociological and developmental trends that are changing the definition, structure, and outcomes of the contemporary family.
4. Deepen an understanding of parent-child attachment and deprivation and their developmental effects on individuals, including a perceptive grasp of the way their own family of origin formed them and their image of God during their early years.
5. Identify family systems and the consequent roles they create for members in those systems reflecting critically on how existing descriptions name or fail to name the significant issues in one's own experience of family.
6. Image the components of healthy families and growing marriages and commit to encourage their growth in the faith community.
7. Recognize the power and potential of congregational communities to intercept, surround, heal, and empower those suffering from family loss, tragedy, and pain.
8. Identify gender differences in identity development and self-functioning, and the uniqueness each gender tends to bring to the family equation.
9. Experience aspects of the classroom as a demonstration of Trinitarian community.

Textbooks:

Norman Cohen, *Self, Struggle & Change: Family Conflict Stories in Genesis and Their Healing Insights for Our Lives*. Woodstock VT: Jewish Lights Press, 1995.

Larry Crabb, *Connecting: A Radical New Vision*. Nashville: Word, 1997.

Freudenburg, Ben and Lawrence, Rick, *The Family Friendly Church*. Vital Ministry, 1998.

Donald Joy, *Empower Your Kids to be Adults*. Nappanee: Indiana, 2000.

Reading Packet (The packet may be delayed from arriving in the bookstore until after the semester begins, but should not adversely affect assignments)

Mike Mason, *The Mystery of Marriage: Meditations on the Miracle*. Sisters: Multnomah, 1985.

If you have read one of these texts and/or have reason that you want to focus on a particular topic not covered by these texts I will allow some substitutions. Please submit any proposed substitutions to me in writing.

Class projects and papers

Attendance and Participation (5 points)

Loan-granting institutions are now requiring attendance records on students for accounting purposes. Therefore, the faculty has an obligation to take daily attendance records in every class and report any repetitive absences. A small percentage of your grade for this class depends on attendance and includes what you bring to the “festival of sharing” on the final class days. Especially in the case of borderline grades, being remembered by the professor for your comments in class and creativity in the final project can be determinative

The festival of sharing is your opportunity to share personal truth that has come home to you this semester as a result of this class. Draw deeply from your creative side in what you want to present and really add value to this closure experience for your colleagues. If you work in a form of art, create something related to the family and bring it to show; If you are from another culture introduce us to some customs that can broaden our understanding of family life in your home (e.g. wedding videos, rites of passage, stories that your tribe tells or national myths that reveal the values of your culture); If your family has a particularly profound way of teaching faith at home or you as a couple have a great way to bless each other, demonstrate for us how it is done (no ethos violations please); If you realized something about yourself you have never seen before, bring your best journal entry in which you wrote about it; If your grade is suffering, bring food. Unfortunately in a class this size the presentation must be kept short, no longer than three minutes. (If there is ample reason to need a bit longer see me ahead of time.)

The “Exercise in Essential Living” (10 points)

This phrase comes from Henry David Thoreau’s experiential accounting of *Walden* in which he attempted to determine the bare bones of the necessity of life. Although we would not want to give Thoreau too much authority, his endeavor toward the simplicity of what’s essential seems especially pertinent for families today. Thus, on a smaller scale this assignment asks you to take at least four hours of one full day (even better if you could commit a full sabbath to it) and conduct your own “exercise in essential living.” It asks you to consider what really are the essentials of living fully? what really replenishes your soul?, what gladdens your heart?, what puts the fizz back in your doctor pepper?

Or, to be even more Christlike, aim these questions not at yourself, but at how you could bless your family, spouse, and/or significant other? What kind of a day could you create for them that at the end of it they would say “Ahhhh, today was the most “essential” experience I’ve had in years!! Today I was really loved!! Today we really connected.”

Then take as many pages as there is energy in the experience for you to communicate what you have learned and come to discover about how to live a soulful, essential life and/or how you give it to others. Don’t be afraid to report as well on any frustration you may have had in the experience, these too may be rich sources of enlightenment for you, revealing why so many of us “live lives of quiet desperation,” disconnected from those we purport to love most.

Journals (6 entries required for a total of 30 points)

I fully anticipate that in almost every class session and/or reading assignment you will find rich material for personal reflection and meaning making. Though some of these probes may be irritating, I believe them to be the “stuff” the Holy Spirit would desire for us to rub and polish into the pearls of our soul. I find journaling to be a rich way to be intentionally involved in this refinishing work. If you have another method of processing information I am open to alternative means of how you might address these personal issues - e.g., assembling life’s experiences through a collection of music, painting, writing poetry, or taped conversations as long you are faithful in responding to the assignment.

There are three particular units in which you are asked to make one entry for each week of class, and a final entry may constitute your closure reflection for the festival of sharing. Typed journal entries are easiest to read, but if script is more personal and at least legible, feel free to compose it how you would like. You can use whatever container you desire, but be aware that in order to facilitate my remarks there may be occasion where I have the journals for a week or two.

Journal entries are held strictly confidential and will be returned directly to you in class, so feel free to be raw, honest and vulnerable. Nothing is counted against you for the language you choose to use in your journals. Indeed, I find that I tend to meet students in my feedback at whatever level they choose to expose me to (I think that is often the way the Holy Spirit works with us and between us). However, I also think it is best that I not enter into a formal therapeutic relationship with you while also serving as professor. If you uncover issues in which I think there might be benefit to seek further counseling, I will suggest it to you and with your permission we can work through student services to get an appointment with one of my respected colleagues or refer you to someone specializing in a particular area.

Although the assignments for the class require you to make a total of 6-7 journal entries I am certainly open to you pursuing additional journaling and receiving extra credit for other personal reflection, especially if there are moments of illumination that occur for you that you know the Spirit is prompting you to dig deeper and “suck the marrow” out of the experience (to use another rich phrase from Thoreau). Following are some additional questions I have found to be provocative in my own journey.

- Being made in the “image of God” implies that I have the ability to create. I feel most creatively alive when I _____?
- What might my family or spouse be learning by observing me what grace and holiness feel like and how godliness manifests itself in a persons’ life? How will they learn to pray? What in my life is teaching them to experience life as gift and to gain a heart of gratitude?
- How might the church develop a wholistic approach to healthy sexuality?
- What would it be like to be married to someone like me?
- What would I experience and feel at church if I were a single person, thirty to forty years old attending a Sunday school class and a worship service?
- How can I help myself and others honor the midlife journey?
- What vision can the church carry that will curb the baby boomers tendency to spend retirement narcissistically?
- How can the church honor and deploy the wisdom/gifts for ministry of the elderly?
- What question do I most hope that nobody will ever ask me while I am in seminary?

Unit papers (55 points total consists of four unit papers)

In four of the units a specific writing assignment is detailed. The first one is given twice as much weight as the latter ones. Because these assignments vary widely, see the remainder of the syllabus for particularities. **Note, although the due dates are spaced periodically throughout the semester I would encourage you to become familiar with the syllabus and be thinking ahead of time regarding what you may need to fulfill a particular assignment.**

Grading Scale

1. Attendance/Participation	5 points
2. Exercise in Essential Living	10 points
3. Journal Entries	30 points
4. Unit papers	55 points total (22 points for unit 1, 11 points each for units 4,5, and 7)
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TOTAL	100points

The following descriptions written in italics have been determined by the faculty at Asbury Seminary and provide the guidelines for grading. I have attempted to provide additional rubrics following each description to clarify what I tend to look for in determining the mark for a particular assignment.

A = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

Exceptional work is constituted by such things as: substantive theological reflection that reveals engagement of the “big ideas” of Scripture or the “big ideas” represented in the existing body of knowledge from the social sciences in a particular area of study and represented via assigned texts and presentations; thorough and penetrating personal insight gained from a sustained consideration of one’s experience through the lifespan thus far; creativity in translating assignments into useful pedagogical presentations; and excellence in grammatical, stylistic and communicative aspects of writing.

B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

Good work is constituted by: solid theological reflection on the assigned readings and presentations in response to the given questions for a particular unit; the capacity to utilize classroom discussions and readings to understand and critically engage one’s own story; accurate ability to name specific ministry implications from one’s processing of information; and carefulness in grammatical, stylistic and communicative aspects of writing.

C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

Acceptable work is constituted by: obvious acquaintance with the assigned readings and classroom discussions at a level that allows for theological thought in response to the questions posed for a particular unit; references to one’s own story at a level that makes application of truth and would interest a congregational member in the insights being expounded; capacity to communicate grammatically and stylistically without detracting from the presentation.

D = Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

Cursory reading of the texts that fail to represent the author’s intent; a flat restatement of the author’s work void of any personal appropriation of the material; grammatical or stylistic errors that frustrate the reader and detract from the thought of the paper; or other failures to fulfill reasonable expectations flowing from a seminary course of this nature.

F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Unacceptable work is usually willful, unexplained, or inexcusable lack of fulfillment of class assignments.

Planned Spring Agenda

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>Assignments/Class Focus</u>	<u>Readings</u>
UNIT 1 – Trinitarian Foundations, Creation Design and Intent	Sept 3 Sept 5	Intro, Df family The classroom as community	Crabb 1-4
	Sept 10 Sept 12	Creation – God’s intent The Fall	Cohen 1, Crabb 5-8 Cohen 2, Crabb 9-12
	Sept 17 Sept 19	Stevens article Crabb Discussion	Crabb 13-17

The assignment for this unit is to write a four page, double-spaced paper that provides a theological foundation for your understanding of the family. The paper should reflect a thoughtful reading and interaction with both the readings for this unit and the discussions from class. However, I am not so much interested in you outlining or repeating what the text says, nor for you to necessarily agree with the position I have taken in class. Rather, the paper intends to have you wrestle with your own understanding of how these pivotal texts establish parameters for the importance of discipleship development in the home. Specifically, attempt to address each of the following questions in a page of paper:

1. What are the implications of being created in the image of a Trinitarian God for understanding the importance of family??
2. What do you believe the story of creation tells us about gender roles and the intended relationship between a husband and wife?? How has the Fall affected that relationship? Are there places in society, families, or even church where we seem to be sanctioning more of the consequences of the fall than the creation intent??
3. Reflecting on your reading from Crabb (especially the chart on page 39 that gets at the core of his book) offer a theological appraisal of how the ministry one offers tends to reflect one’s view of personhood and one’s diagnosis of the human condition.
4. Considering all that has been covered in this unit, how would you describe a family that represented Trinitarian community? **DUE SEPT 19**

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS/FOCUS</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
UNIT 2 Sociological/Developmental Foci on the family What healthy families look like/the Blessing Family systems	Sept 24 Sept 26 Oct 1 Oct 3	Is the family changing or declining?	Read the Popenoe article Joy – Intro, 1-4

This week long unit allows you to get started on your journal. Make one two-three page entry for each week following the guidelines established for journaling. Focus this week on the family system in which you were formed: What was healthy in your family of origin? What aspects of “the blessing” did you receive from them and what was missing? How can the body of Christ repair the identity wounds caused by families where no blessing was given, where the blessing was conditional, or where only part of the blessing was given? **DUE OCT 3**

UNIT 3 Discipleship and Faith Formation in Children	Oct 8 Oct 10 Oct 15 Oct 17	Erikson, funded trust and autonomy Children's faith formation and early attachment	Cohen 4,5, 6 Article on The Essential Father
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In the middle of this unit a schematic from Bob Biehl's book WHY YOU DO WHAT YOU DO links one's dominant childhood feeling with an adult phobia and a style of relating. Similarly, attachment style research suggests that the kind of attachment one had with a primary caregiver tends to develop into an internal working model that is carried into subsequent relationships in the lifespan. For this unit, write a three page personal reflection paper focused on your childhood that responds to each of the following probes. First, name what you believe was your dominant childhood feeling and the attachment style(s) in which you were nurtured. Describe how these might be affecting the assumptions you bring to relationships today and the way you typically relate to others in positions of authority and in intimate relationships. Offer theological commentary on the linkages you believe exist between early relational development in the family and issues of faith formation such as ones concept of God, trust, obedience, and images of the "ultimate environment." Finally, from your evaluation of the importance of these early formative experiences spell out the implications for ministry to families keeping in mind the growing population of single parent families, father-absent contexts, latchkey children, the prevalence of day care centers, lesbian and gay couples raising children, etc. **DUE OCT 17**

UNIT 4 Discipleship and Faith Formation in Adolescence	Oct 22 Oct 24 Oct 29 Oct 31	Adolescent faith development Identity Sexuality and the Media Discipline Rites of passage	Joy - 5-9 Chapters in reading packet from Josselson on identity development
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For this unit return to journaling again, making at least one entry for each week of class. Consider some of the following issues as you write: Whose approval did I most seek as an adolescent and why? Who did I have most respect for? Whose attention did I recruit and what implications did it have for what I came to believe about myself? What story is being told about sexuality in the media? How has this story affected/distorted my desires, imagination, and perception about myself and about the way I view members of the opposite sex? Whose "dreamworld" is it and how do I feel about the way it tries to define male-female relationships? What movie do I find myself in and why? How were boundaries negotiated and discipline administered? What would I keep and what would I change in the way I establish boundaries with my own children and/or those I will serve in ministry? **DUE NOV 14 with the journal for the next unit.**

UNIT 5 Discipleship and Faith Formation in Adulthood	Nov 5 Nov 7 Nov 12 Nov 14	How do you know when you are an adult? Marriage and Singleness Gender differences	Mason – Entire book Article from Schnarch
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A common theme that weaves its way through all the material in this unit is the interrelationship between our longing for companionship and our need for independence. Schnarch regards the interaction of these two seemingly opposing forces as creating a crucible in relationships whereby opportunity is created for growth into new levels of relational maturity. Describing emotional differentiation as the capacity to “hold onto yourself while staying in relationship and moving closer to the one(s) you love the most,” Schnarch makes the provocative observation that we are likely only as emotionally differentiated as the family that we emerged from and that we almost invariably marry someone who is at the same level of emotional differentiation as ourselves. In this unit I want you to journal about where you see yourself in light of independence and intimacy and how they interact in your life. At this point in the semester I want you to begin to generate your own questions for processing this material and transferring applications to your own life. However, let me offer a few examples to guide your thinking. When and how did your family allow you to become your own person – i.e. independent? Could your family disagree and allow you your own opinions or feelings without it threatening your sense of connection or were you emotionally fused and expected to yield whatever you wanted? How much emotional distance do you usually keep from friends, dating partners, family, or a spouse? What might this tell you about your capacity to feel like you can be yourself and yet be connected to other people? **DUE WITH PREVIOUS UNIT ON NOV 14.**

UNIT 6	Nov 19 Nov 21	Mid life Step and Blended families Divorce/Remarriage	Cohen 3 Freudenburg (entire book)
	Nov 26 Nov 28	Reading Week	

For this unit write a two to three page paper that reflects your theology of divorce. You are free to choose your format. It can be your own personal policy you create for performing weddings in your church, a letter to a congregational member who has just divorced and feels that God has abandoned her, or a response to a committee at the church who asks you for input in creating a congregational policy, or even a sermon. Indicate in your paper under what circumstances you would perform a second wedding for someone. **DUE BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR READING WEEK.**
PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY COMPLETED IT YOUR EXERCISE IN ESSENTIAL LIVING IS DUE UPON RETURNING ON DEC 3.

UNIT 7 Discipleship in later adulthood	Dec 3 Dec 5	Grandparenting Later life /Death and dying Festival of Sharing	
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In your ministry you are likely to come across several issues related to discipleship and the family that there simply was not time to research in depth while at seminary, nor will there be a lot of time to write research papers while serving a congregation. In this final unit study a family, ministry, or personal issue in which you feel like you or the church needs more insight. Examples might include: characteristics of families from another ethnic background, outlining a series of youth talks on sexuality, direction to families for devotionals/family altar, ministering to infertile couples, plans to start a twelve-step ministry for people struggling with addictions, etc. Although I hope you will aim for excellence, I don't insist that this be a thoroughly researched paper. Rather, I'd like for you to approach it as you might if you had a single day to research a burning issue that someone in your church needed you to address next month in a seminar, from the pulpit, etc., or one that you needed to personally explore.

My expectation would be that you spend about an hour perusing the library, the internet, and/or make phone calls to experts to find three or four of the best resources on the subject. Whereas I have expected you to read the assigned textbooks for class thoroughly, this assignment pushes you to read broadly and overview the stuff available on a given topic initiating a habit of resourcefulness for you and your congregation. **DUE BY DEC 12.**

UNIT 8 CLOSURE	Dec 10 9:00-11:00	Festival of sharing Evaluations	
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